lifetime validity subject to certain conditions. Such plans are suitable for subscribers who would like to have longer validity without having to pay recurring fixed monthly charges.

As per Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) Act, TRAI has been mandated to fix telecom tariff.

After due consultation process, TRAI has prescribed regulatory guidelines through the Telecommunication Tariff (Forty third Amendment) Order dated 21-03-2006 which *inter-alia* mandated:—

(i) The operators to continue to provide service in respect of Lifetime schemes as long as they have permission to provide such telecom service under the current license or renewed license;

(ii) Hike in any item of tariff during the specified validity period is prohibited; and

(iii) The service provider shall inform the subscribers of the month and year of expiry of its current license.

Currently, Telecom Operators are offering a number of alternative tariff plans targeted at different classes of subscribers. A consumer is free to choose from any of the available tariff plans suiting his usage profite. To ensure consumer transparency, TRAI has taken a number of measures and issued many Orders/Directions in this regard. TRAI *vide* Direction dated 14-07-2006 has also sought an yearly certificate of compliance from telecom service providers in respect of Directions issued by TRAI on tariff matters.

Operational phone towers in Bihar

2130. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of phone towers sanctioned in Katihar, Bihar during the last two years;

(b) whether the sanctioned towers have become operational;

(c) if so, the details thereof, location-wise;

(d) whether there is any provision for increasing the number of towers in this district in near future; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Sir, twenty two phone towers for cellular mobile (GSM) were sanctioned in Katihar district of Bihar during the last two years.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The details are given in the Statement-I (*See* below).

(d) and (e) BSNL has planned expansion of its network in Katihar district by installing 11 towers for Mobile Service and 8 towers for WLL service in this financial year subject to availability of equipment. The details are given in the Statement-II.

Statement-I

*Mobile towers at Katihar district**

Sl. No.	Place at which tower installed
1	Barsoi
2	Dighri
3	Katihar Medical College
4	Dandkhora
5	Dumar Bazar
6	Guru Bazar
7	Mahananda T.E.
8	Bhaumik Para
9	Telecom Colony
10	Mahila College
11	Mirchai Bari
12	Shiv Mandir
13	Indira Nagar
14	Barmasia

Sl. No.	Place at which tower installed
15	Katihar Microwave
16	Korha
17	Kursela
18	Manihari
19	Salmari
20	Sameli (Pothia)
21	Seemapur
22	Sonaili

* No WLL tower was installed in Katihar district in last 2 years.

Statement-II

Details of additional towers tentatively proposed to be installed in Katihar district

Sl. No.	Place at which tower to be installed
	GSM Mobile Tower
1	Amdabad-BHQ
2	Ajam Nagar-BHQ
3	Balrampur-BHQ
4	Falka-BHQ
5	Hassanganj-BHQ
6	Kadwa-BHQ
7	Mansahi-BHQ
8	Pranpur-BHQ
9	Kumaripur
10	Kurum hat
11	Lava

Sl. No.	Place at which tower to be installed
	WLL Tower
1	Araria
2	Katihar
3	Manihari
4	Routa
5	Jalalgarh
6	Dhamdata
7	Sameli (Pothia)
8	Barsoi

Telecom sector in Andhra Pradesh

2131. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are encouraging the private players in the telecom sector in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the telecom employees in the State have prepared to go on strike in September, 2006 opposing such decisions; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and Government's comments in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) The Government has liberalized the telecom sector and accordingly has issued Unified Access Service/ Cellular Mobile Telephone Service Licences to Five private operators for providing telecom services in Andhra Pradesh. This is to generate competitive environment which will benefit the consumers.

(c) and (d) The employees of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) have given a notice of strike in September, 2006 on certain policies of the Government, including Local Loop unbundling. No instructions have been issued by the Government till date on Local Loop unbundling.